

Partnering

Description

Communities can gain many advantages and economies of scale from partnering with other local governments to conduct planning activities and provide certain services. Planning issues do not necessarily follow municipal boundaries. Therefore, planning at a regional level can provide a better picture of issues and result in more effective solutions. Regional planning or partnering provides opportunities to recognize and respond to needs and opportunities in a collective fashion.

Communities are becoming more connected as cities and towns experience growth in and around their jurisdictions. Commute patterns regularly extend beyond where a person lives; and large developments (residential, commercial or industrial) in one area affect the growth and traffic patterns of the entire region. Regional planning or partnering can be an effective way to address these issues at an appropriate scale. Multiple communities' resources are collectively applied for the betterment of the region.

Specific benefits from regional planning or partnering include:

- Economies of scale in providing municipal services such as water, sewer, electric, etc. and sharing revenue.
- Additional resources that may not otherwise be available.
- More effective environmental solutions and management since streams, wetlands, lakes, etc. do not respect political boundaries.
- Educational opportunities from collaboration.
- Clear agreements regarding annexation and municipal services for newly annexed areas.

A local government can manage its own growth and predict the growth around it, but it cannot manage the growth for an entire region. With regional/ intergovernmental planning, the entire region's growth can be planned for and managed more effectively.

Consolidating a Service

Neighboring towns, cities and counties can partner and pool their financial and personnel resources in providing a particular service. For example, a city or town could partner with the county to provide planning services. The two governments could benefit by hiring one planning director instead of duplicating this service in each government entity.

Many smaller communities cannot dedicate the needed financial resources to planning efforts due to limited budgets. Providing these services could cause a financial burden on the local government, and therefore, planning services might not be offered. Partnering to provide planning, or other, services is an option to provide the service but not create an overwhelming financial burden.

Partnering for a Project

Local governments can also partner for a particular project or planning effort. If both the city and county have a need to update their comprehensive plan, the two individual projects can be combined. Partnering also allows for better coordination between the two entities.

Partnering on a project allows for multiple benefits. By planning on a larger scale, issues that extend beyond an individual city's jurisdiction can be better addressed. Environmental issues such as watershed planning or stream restoration do not stop at a town, city or county border. By allowing multiple entities partner to plan for this issue, the result will be significantly better than if each entity created a separate plan.

Partnering

By partnering on a particular project, administrative and overhead costs can be decreased. This can lessen the money and time each entity would need to dedicate to the project or allow additional tasks to be completed that would otherwise not be possible. For example, if two communities partner on a plan, the both communities can consolidate steering committee and public meetings, advertising for hearings, reproduction and printing expenses, and the time to coordinate and manage the project. This could decrease the amount of financing each community would have to provide or allow the plan to expand the scope of the plan.

Many communities rely on neighboring cities or towns for various economic needs. Many residents routinely commute out of their own community daily for work or shopping. If a community builds a large regional retail development, it can greatly affect the economic vitality of a neighboring community's small downtown or Main Street. Regional coordination can allow both communities to receive economic benefits.

Intergovernmental Agreements

Indiana Code specifies various requirements for intergovernmental or interlocal agreements. Additional or varying requirements for particular types of projects may apply; refer to IC 36-1-7 for all requirements.

According to IC 36-1-7-3, interlocal agreements must contain the following:

1. The agreement duration.
2. The purpose of the agreement.
3. The manner of financing, staffing, and supplying the joint undertaking and of establishing and maintaining a budget for the agreement.
4. The methods that may be used in accomplishing the partial or complete termination of the agreement and for disposing of property upon partial or complete termination.
5. Administration through:
 - a. A separate legal entity, the nature, organization, composition, and powers of which must be provided; or
 - b. A joint board composed of representatives of the entities that are parties to the agreement, and on which all parties to the agreement must be represented.
6. The manner of acquiring, holding, and disposing of real and personal property used in the joint undertaking, whenever a joint board is created under subdivision (5)(B).

Relevant Statutes

- IC 36-1-7 - Chapter 7. Interlocal Cooperation

Capacity Recommendations

This tool can be useful for all communities, but it is particularly helpful for communities with limited financial resources for planning. It can decrease the costs a local government might incur with staff salaries and project expenses.

Guidelines / Considerations for Implementation

- Communities that are partnering will need to address their individual and the regional needs and goals.
- Coordination between the communities should be outlined in an intergovernmental agreement and each party should know their responsibilities.
- Some entities will not see the need to cooperate in intergovernmental planning.

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Example Ordinances

No example ordinances are available for this tool.

Example Studies

No example studies are available for this tool.

Helpful References and Links

- **Intergovernmental Planning & Cooperation, Building a Regional Framework, Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission.** The Northeastern Illinois region has over 1,200 local governments consisting of counties, cities, towns, villages and others. This report covers the different entities, the challenges of intergovernmental planning, examples and case studies in the area, and includes a list of recommended resources [<http://www.nipc.org/planning/pdf/nipc%20intergov%20broch.pdf>].
- **Intergovernmental Challenges for the 1990's**, Proceedings of the Intergovernmental Roundtable by Mary Kihl. APA Planners Press, 1991 [<http://www.planning.org/APAStore/Search/Default.aspx?p=1816>].

Helpful Contacts

- **Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations:** Established in 1995 by the Indiana General Assembly, its mission “is to create effective communication, cooperation, and partnerships between the federal, state, and local units of government to improve the delivery of services to the citizens of Indiana.” [<http://iacir.spea.iupui.edu/default.htm>]

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- **American Planning Association Planning Advisory Service:** This service, provided by the American Planning Association, is intended to help communities obtain information about different planning topics and to answer planning questions. Communities may subscribe to the service or seek assistance on an as-needed basis. The service utilizes a vast amount of resources to answer questions and provide information such as sample ordinances, reports, etc.

Contact:

American Planning Association

Planning Advisory Service

122 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 1600

Chicago, IL 60603

Phone: 312-431-9100

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pas@planning.org

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- **Community Based Projects (CBP):** Ball State University's College of Architecture and Planning hosts an outreach and service program that specializes in providing technical assistance on a variety of small town and rural issues, including comprehensive plans. Services are available from CBP at lower rates than typical consultants or they are offered for free depending upon project type. Contact CBP staff for more information regarding services and fees.

Community Based Projects
College of Architecture and Planning
Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306
(765) 285-1350
cbp@bsu.edu
<http://www.bsu.edu/cbp/>

- **Center for Urban Policy and the Environment:** As part of the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at IUPUI, this organization can assist in a variety of planning related matters.

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Other Possible Funding Sources

No other funding sources have been identified for this tool.

Program Objectives and Issues Addressed

- Growth management
- General planning
- Economic development
- Increased planning capacity
- Transportation network issues
- Corridor planning
- Increasing planning capacity
- Regional/ intergovernmental planning
- General planning tasks

See Also

- Advisory/ Area Plan Commission